114. Suggestions for the improvement of Vernacular Education.

Mr. N. Govinda Pillai (Member, Mavelikara Taluk) suggested the following reforms:—

(1) Primary education should be made compulsory and should be entirely under the control and guidance of Government, private bodies being absolved of all responsibility in regard to it.

(2) School-buildings were now being put up by people at their cost. The evil was two-fold. The buildings were not substantial and they were being built on sites convenient to the prime-movers who actually did the work and were not regulated by local educational requirements. Thus, there was more than one school in particular localities, while certain places where there was real necessity had none. The remedy lay in the department laying down definite rules and conditions. The present area of a school-site, *viz.*, half an acre, was not sufficient. There should be at least 2 or 3 acres for play-grounds, agricultural work, &c.

(3) The school-hours should be between 8 and 10–30 A. M. and between 2 and 4–30 P. M. as such an arrangement would obviate the problem of noon-day meals.

(4) The curricula of studies should be so arranged as to necessitate no books, or as few books as possible, in the lower classes. Most of the subjects should be taught orally in the lower classes. Agriculture should be made a compulsory subject with special provision for the practical teaching and cultivation of food crops like paddy. Domestic economy should be substituted for Agriculture in the case of girls.

(5) English should be made a compulsory subject.

(6) At present the number of trained teachers was very small. If it was not possible to turn out a larger number of trained teachers from the existing Training Schools, Teachers' Associations should be established with the Head Master of the nearest Higher Grade English school as President and the untrained teachers should be trained by the Associations by giving model lessons.

(7) The pay of teachers in Vernacular schools should be increased and better prospects should be held out to them.

(8) Text-books approved by the Text-book Committee should be published and the copy-right of such books should be purchased by Government. The policy of giving, on contract to foreign firms, the right of publishing text-books should be given up. The number of text-books should be considerably reduced. In the case of books rejected, the reasons for rejection should be published in the Gazette.

(9) The Assistant Inspectors should be given the control and inspection of Higher Grade Vernacular schools also which should be under the sole and undivided authority of one officer.

(10) Some of the Assistant Inspectors should be sent to Japan for training.

(11) The Pakuthi Education Committees started in some taluks did not work satisfactorily. They should be entrusted with definite work and some responsibility and power.

(12) If, in carrying out the above reforms, the Government wanted financial support from the people, there was no objection in levying an educational cess.

Mr. S. V. E. A Manikkam Chettiyar (Member, Nominated) after thanking the Government for the interest taken by them in the cause of Vernacular education made the following suggestions :—

(1) Class VIII should be opened in more Vernacular schools every year.

(2) Vernacular education should be solely under the control of an Indian Officer.

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(3) Vernacular should be made a compulsory subject in the English schools.

(4) A Committee should be appointed for the publication of advanced text-books in literature for use in Vernacular schools.

(5) Private students should be permitted to appear for the final examinations in Class VIII.

(6) Inspectors should give model lessons during their inspection.

(7) Students passing out of Class VII in Vernacular schools should be admitted into the Third Form in English schools.

(8) An examination for officers in Tamil or Malayalam should be instituted like that for the I. C. S. Officers.

(9) Tamil education should be encouraged by appointing Tamil-knowing teachers and Inspectors in the Tamil taluks and by the opening of a Tamil Higher Grade school in Trivandrum.

Mr. G. Padmanabhan (Member, Nominated) made the following suggestions:—

(1) Those who passed out of Class VII in a Vernacular school with not less than 40 per cent of marks in English should be admitted into the Third Form of an English school.

(2) The number of teachers and inspecting officers should be increased to cope with the increasing work.

(3) The children of the depressed classes, such as Parayas, Pulayas and Kuravas, should be supplied with Vernacular text-books *grat s*

(4) Private candidates should be admitted to Government examinations.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

115. Desirability of imparting instruction in technical subjects in all Higher Grade English Schools.

Mr. P. J. Abraham (Member, T. I. C., Mavelikara) said that only about 20 per cent. of the pupils who joined the Preparatory Class proceeded to a literary course in a University. Perhaps 5 per cent. entered Government service. There still remained 75 per cent. of the pupils in English schools who were in quest of employment. Any scheme of industrial and commercial education should utilize to the fullest extent the existing educational machinery. The two classes of schools imparting general education were the Vernacular schools and the English schools. For any scheme of industrial education, there ought to be a sound foundation which was now supplied in Vernacular schools. It was, therefore, desirable that pupils passing the Vernacular School Leaving Examination and showing special aptitude for higher education should be encouraged by means of scholarships to acquire technical education in institutions started for the purpose. He meant by technical education that special training which helped to qualify a person to engage in some branch of productive industry as well as in the acquisition of manual skill. Commercial education might be regarded as a branch of technical education. The Travancore Education Code made provision for the introduction of commercial education in Higher Grade English Schools. But there was no school which afforded facilities for commercial education. The subjects mentioned in the Code were Office correspondence and practice, Commercial Practice, Book-keeping and Type-writing. The following subjects might be added, *viz.*, Precis-writing and Shorthand, Physical and Commercial Geography and Elements of Political Economy with special reference to money, credit, banking, foreign trade and foreign exchange. Like Japan, Travancore might have a technical institute in which complete instruction should be given in industrial science and industrial art. The other alternative was to teach industrial science in some of the Higher Grade English schools and send those young men who showed special aptitude for technical education to Japan or America. On their return, a start could be made in certain industries suitable to the country. In conclusion, the Member requested Agriculture being given a prominent place in any scheme of industrial and technical education.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

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